
Dr. *TERRICK's*

S E R M O N

Preached before the HONOURABLE

HOUSE of COMMONS.

Lunæ, 9^o die Februarii, 1756.

Ordered,

THAT the Thanks of this House be given to the Reverend Dr. *Terrick*, for the Sermon by him preached upon *Friday* last before this House at *St. Margaret's, Westminster*; and that he be desired to print the same; and that Sir *John Philipps*, Mr. *Edward Vernon*, Colonel *Cornwallis*, and Sir *John Crosse*, do acquaint him therewith.

J. DYSON,
Cl. Dom. Com.

A
S E R M O N

Preached before the Honourable

H O U S E of C O M M O N S,

A T

St. Margaret's, Westminster,

On Friday, February 6, 1756;

Being the Day appointed by HIS MAJESTY'S
Royal Proclamation for a General Fast.

By *RICHARD TERRICK*, D. D.

Canon Residentiary of St. PAUL'S,
And Chaplain in Ordinary to his MAJESTY.

Bp

L O N D O N:

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MDCCCLVI.

MEMORANDUM

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Mr. [Name]

On [Date]

[Text]

RECEIVED



[Text]

W. [Name]

[Text]

Jeremiah xviii. 7, 8.

At what instant I shall speak concerning a Nation, and concerning a Kingdom, to pluck up and to pull down, and to destroy it : If that Nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their Evil, I will repent of the Evil, that I thought to do unto them.

IT is an awful Reflection, and at the same time the only one, which can give any true Support to the mind, in a day of Distress, that there is a God, which ruleth over all, and that nothing happens either in Heaven or in Earth, but what is the immediate Effect of His Wisdom, Goodness, and Power, or of Second Causes acting by His Permission and Direction : And therefore when it pleases the Almighty to alarm the World with the awakening Interpositions of His Providence, we are naturally led to conclude, that they speak to us the Language of the Divine Displeasure, and are intended to punish and correct us for our Sins : And no wonder, if considered in this religious View, they make Men thoughtful and serious, and *cause the Inha-*

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bitants of the Land to fear and tremble before their God: But however these amazing exertions of Divine Power may strike us with Terror, we have still the Comfort, *that we are in the hands of a kind and a good God, who spares, when we deserve Punishment, in the midst of wrath thinks upon Mercy, and alarms us with the severer Dispensations of His Providence, that we may learn that Righteousness* which nothing else could teach us.

Were it not for this Reflection, every view of ourselves and of the state of the world around us would fill us with despair, and make us afraid to appear this day before our God with our solemn Supplications for ourselves, our Families, and our Country: But we know, that with God there is Mercy and Compassion: For tho' He has spoken to us in a Language threatening and terrible, and has given us a most alarming Instance of that Destruction, which He is able to bring upon the Earth, yet this is our Consolation, that His Mercy is as extensive as His Power. For hear the gracious Declaration of God Himself by the Mouth of His Prophet, "*At what instant I shall speak concerning a Nation, and concerning a Kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it. If that Nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their Evil, I will repent of the Evil, that I thought to do unto them.*"

We want not the solemn Denunciation of a Prophet to warn us of our present Danger; God Himself commands our Attention by the louder Calls of his Anger, and,

and, however we might disregard the silent Admonitions of Providence, in the calm and regular Course of Nature, the *Thunder* of *His Voice*, in the Severity of His Judgments, must alarm, and bring us home to ourselves: Happy will it be for us, if they have this Effect, if the Calamities, which other Nations have experienced, and which have to us been hitherto only the merciful Warnings of a kind and good Providence, dispose us *to bear the Rod*, and to consider, with that Awe which becomes us, *the Hand which hath appointed it*.

It is from a serious Sense of these alarming Dispensations, that we are called upon by the Royal Authority, to humble ourselves before our God, and with Fasting and Prayer to recommend ourselves to His Protection: And perhaps there is not a Period in the History of this Nation, when our Situation was more alarming, or our Addresses to Heaven more seasonable; and if we may judge by the solemn Appearance of this Day, there never was a time, when we seemed more affected with our Danger, or poured forth our Hearts in more sincere and affectionate Petitions to the Throne of Grace. *Save Lord, we perish*, is the united Prayer of the people of this Land; and may that God, who sitteth over all, and ordereth all things in Heaven and in Earth, either avert the Judgments which we fear, prepare us for them, or support us under them.

With this Religious Awe upon our Minds, the proper temper of Men affected with the terrors of the Lord,

let us attend to some of those Circumstances, which the solemn Oecasion of this day more particularly offers to our thoughts, and to those Lessons of Instruction, which may make this our Humiliation a welcome Sacrifice to the God of Heaven.

It hath pleased the Almighty, for reasons best known to His infinite Wisdom, (whether for Correction to those who have suffered, or in Mercy to warn the rest of Mankind) to alarm the world with a most awful Instance of His over-ruling Power, by sending abroad one of those severe Calamities, which in all Ages have been considered, as the most terrible Instruments of Vengeance in the Hand of Providence: Terrible indeed they are in themselves, and peculiarly fitted to strike the mind with horror; for what can the Imagination form more dreadful and astonishing, than those Convulsions of Nature, which seem to *shake the Earth out of her place*, and *make the Pillars thereof to tremble*: But how much more terrible, in that Destruction, which they bring upon the Earth, when great and flourishing Cities are levelled with the dust, and Thousands of the Inhabitants in the midst of their Cares, their Pleasures, and their Vices, are sent, unprepared, to answer for themselves before a just and a powerful God. Your own thoughts must assist you in representing to yourselves, what no words can express, the Horror and Desolation of that Calamity, which makes so solemn a part in this our day of Humiliation. How dreadful is it to reflect, that when God
stretched

stretched His hand over the Sea, and shook the Kingdoms, when the Mountains trembled, and the everlasting Hills did bow, a great and populous City was, as it were, in a moment, cast down and made desolate, and with all its Pride and Glory sunk into one general Ruin! Bring the Reflection home to yourselves, and consider, how great would be your Consternation, to feel the Earth shaking from its Center, to see every thing falling around you, your Houses, your Palaces, and your Temples, to have no hopes but in flying from your danger, and yet to have no place of Refuge to fly to for Security: Or if, *whilst thousands fall besides you, and ten thousands at your right hand,* the Providence of God should save you, as it were, by a Miracle of Mercy, with what Anguish of mind would you view the scene of misery on every side, how would it pierce your heart to hear the Cries and Groans of the dying, to see the distresses of thousands made wretched and miserable, and to feel with all the agonies of nature a Separation from your Friends, your Relations, and your Children? How would you be tempted almost in despair to think this the severest part of your Calamity, that you survive the loss of every thing dear and near unto you? It is too painful to the tenderness of our nature even to reflect upon such affecting Scenes of Distress: Think then (and let the Thought melt you into the tenderest Sentiments of Pity and Compassion) what must have been the real Sufferings of those, who were the miserable Sharers in this day of Calamity,

Calamity, or who still remain to mourn over, and lament the Distresses of their Country: Think with Awe and Reverence upon that Scene of Desolation, and acknowledge that "*Great and terrible are thy Works, O God; dreadful and astonishing the Ways of thy Providence: Thou even Thou art to be feared, for who can stand before thy Indignation, who can abide the Fierceness of thy Anger? When thy Fury is poured out like Fire, and the rocks are thrown by Thee, shall not the Earth and its Inhabitants fear and tremble before their God?*"

And have we not too much reason to fear, when we consider, that as no Calamity of this kind was ever more destructive in its Effects, than that which is the Subject of our solemn Reflections, so none was ever more extensive in alarming the Fears of Mankind, and in threatening to spread a general Devastation to the most distant Corners of the Earth. It would be a Speculation, which, if rightly improved, must enlarge our Ideas of the infinite Power of that God, who presides over all, to trace the progress of this Calamity thro' that vast extent of Sea and Land, which has been affected with more or less Violence by these Convulsions of Nature: For as if the very Foundations of the Earth were moved, three parts at least of the Globe have felt the influence of these Disorders: In some Countries the Distress has been severe and terrible, and Cities with thousands of their Inhabitants have been destroyed: In others Inundations sudden and impetuous have threatned to lay waste

waste the Land, as if the Fountains of the great Deep were broken up, and its hidden sources opened to overwhelm the Earth: Nor has this our Island (which we vainly imagined the Seat of Security, till by repeated warnings in our Capitol, too soon forgot, we were made to tremble for ourselves) escaped without some sensible Effects of the late Commotions; for to what other cause can we ascribe those sudden and extraordinary Agitations of the waters, which were observed in many parts of this Kingdom, and which, at the same time they give us the alarming Reflection, that our Situation is not out of the reach of such Calamities, are the strongest Arguments for Gratitude to that God, whose Mercies have been our Guard and Protection.

Nor let our Fears be censured, as the Effects of Weakness and Superstition, nor the Overflowings of our Gratitude restrained by those superficial Enquirers into Nature and her Operations, who, to the Dishonour of all true Philosophy, would exclude a Providence out of the World, who neither *considering* with a becoming Reverence *the Majesty of the Lord*, nor *regarding the Operations of His Hands*, and attending only to that Chain of Causes and Effects, which forms and accounts for the natural System of Things, instead of carrying their Thoughts up to that over-ruling Power, by whose continued Energy the Course of Nature itself is regularly directed, affect to view with Indifference the most alarming Instances of Divine Government. Are these Events then less to be feared, merely

merely because they are the Effects of that original Constitution of things established by the great Creator? Or are they not rather to be considered, for that very Reason, as the Operations of the same supreme Author, though we see not the Hand, which directs and gives them all their Force? Or is it to be supposed, that God, when He made the World, by an absolute Decree so fixed the Laws of His Creation, as to reserve to Himself no Power to direct and over-rule them, or to make them subservient to the great Purposes of His Providence? It is sure far more agreeable to all our *Ideas* of the Majesty and Perfections of God to consider Him, as presiding over the grand System of the World, *doing what He pleases in the Armies of Heaven, and amongst the Inhabitants of the Earth*, and employing the whole Creation to execute His Designs, either of Mercy or of Punishment. For, as it is the Language of Scripture to ascribe the most common Blessings of Nature to that God, *who causes His Sun to rise, and sends Rain and fruitful Seasons, making the Grass to grow upon the Mountains, and filling all Things living with Plenteousness*; so, when God *marches through the Land with Indignation*, all Nature is represented, as armed with the Terrors of His Vengeance, *the Hail and the Storm are the Rod of His Anger, the Winds and the Seas fulfill His Word*. When therefore the Destroying Angel is gone forth, and we know not how far His Commission may extend, shall not we be alarmed at His Approach? Shall not we fly for Protection to that God, who alone can stay His Hand?

But

But this is not the only View of those Circumstances, which demands our serious Attention this Day. We are told by Authority, that “the present Situation of publick Affairs (as to the Issue of them) is of the highest Importance to the Peace and Safety of these Kingdoms, to our Commerce and Liberties, and above all to the most valuable Blessing of the Protestant Religion.” A Situation this, which must affect the Heart of every Man, who feels for his Country, and wishes to secure to it those important Interests, which alone can make us a flourishing and happy People.

The Operations of War, that fore Judgment, which, however considered, is a solemn Call to our most serious Reflections, have been hitherto confined to a distant Part of the World, for the necessary Defence of our Colonies against the Encroachments of a restless, ambitious Enemy: But though the Resentment which has been shewn, in doing the Nation that Justice by Force of Arms, which could not be obtained in the Spirit of Peace, has not yet brought home to us those Calamities, which attend the Ravages of War, we know not how soon the Command may go forth to unsheath the Sword, and involve us in those Dangers and Distresses, which no Man, who values, as He ought, the Blessings He enjoys, can consider as drawing near to us without the deepest Concern. To every serious Mind therefore the Prospect of War must always be affecting; its Distresses, even tho’ the Event be successful, open a wide Scene of Hor-

ror and Confusion, and give us the tenderest Feeling for the Miseries of our Fellow-Creatures: But should Providence, for the Punishment of our Sins, determine against us, and give us over a Prey to our Enemies, what more dreadful Image of human Misery can we form, than that Train of Evils, which must be introduced by an enraged Conqueror, triumphing over the Laws, the Liberties, and the Religion of our Country. Much rather might we acknowledge the merciful Hand of Providence, in levelling its Cities even to the Ground, so that the Place thereof shall no more be known, than see this Land of Liberty a Scene of Slavery and Oppression, the Temples, set apart for a manly and rational Devotion, polluted with the Fopperies of Idolatry and Superstition, and the mildest Government, under the best of Kings, exchanged for the lawless Tyranny of an arbitrary Monarch. We depend upon the Wisdom of our Counsels, and the natural Spirit and Genius of our People, as the best human Means for our Guard and Security; yet when we consider, that even the best concerted Schemes, conducted by the most experienced Wisdom and the bravest Resolution, cannot always command Success, and that this must at last depend upon the *great God of Hosts, the Giver of all Victory*, it becomes a Matter of the most serious Concern, and therefore the proper Business of this Day's solemn Devotion, by every Act of Humiliation and Repentance, to implore the Protection of Heaven, and "to beseech the supreme
" Disposer of all Events to go forth with our Fleets and
" Armies,

“ Armies, and in this Time of Danger and Trouble to be
“ our sure Guardian and never-failing Deliverer.”

Happy would it be for us, did we shew the same Zeal to deserve this Protection, which we have in our several Stations exerted to guard and defend ourselves: We should then have no occasion to lament those Circumstances in our present Situation, which, in the moral View of it, are the most alarming Call for a National Humiliation.

It is, I am sensible, a common Topick to complain of the Vices of the Times; no pleasing Entertainment to a good Mind, for sure every Man must see them with Concern, and every Lover of his Country would be glad to find a Remedy. Look then into the World, and see what there is in this view of things, which ought to awaken the Zeal of every good Man for the publick Safety.

It is not to be dissembled, especially when we are called upon to deal sincerely with our God, that the Character given by the Prophets in general of that Nation or Kingdom, which the Lord had spoken to destroy, admits of too strong an Application to ourselves. Are not we, as the *Jews* thus described in Scripture, *a People laden with Iniquity, who neither know the Way of their Lord, nor the Judgments of their God?* a People, neither persuaded by the Mercies, nor improved by the Corrections of Providence; a *People, whose Land mourneth* (mourn it must, whilst it feels even the natural Consequences of its

Sins) for that Profaneness and Immorality, which defy all Authority, and are spreading their Infection almost without Controul; for that abandoned Profligacy, which, against all the Rules of Decency and good Manners, as well as those of good Sense and the Laws of our Country, is employed in every Method, which a depraved Imagination can suggest, to unsettle the Minds, to inflame the Passions, to pollute the Heart, and thereby to dispose Men to the licentious Indulgence of every brutal Appetite; for that Luxury and Extravagance, which are insensibly preying upon the Constitution, debasing the Strength and Courage, corrupting the Morals of the People, and introducing that Poverty, which must fly for its Support to the Distresses of the Publick; for that Love of Pleasure, which banishes every serious Reflection, and will scarce allow a sober Interval for Recollection, though enjoined by the Laws of God and of Man; in a word, for that, which lies at the Root of all, an entire Disregard to every religious Principle, which leaves no Guard upon the Conscience, no Support to the Mind under its various Distresses and Disappointments, and has too fatal an Influence in driving those unhappy Wretches to the desperate Resolution of putting an End to a miserable Being, who have neither Virtue to guard against the Reproaches of the World and their own Consciences, nor any true Courage to bear the common Calamities of Life with Patience? And yet though *the Land mourneth* for these Things, how few are there, who lay them seriously

seriously to Heart, and, with the Zeal of the only true Patriot, make it any part of their Ambition to revive and cherish the decaying Spirit of Virtue and Religion?

And shall not I visit for these Things, saith the Lord? Shall not my Soul be avenged of such a Nation as this? Shall not I speak concerning such a Kingdom, to pluck up, to pull down, and to destroy?

These then are the Circumstances in the State of the World around us, which the Solemnity of this Day calls upon us to consider with Seriousness and Attention: And each of them may teach a Lesson of Instruction, which may be of use in making this our Humiliation a welcome Offering at the Throne of Heaven.

The Calamities of a People, connected to us by all the Ties of Alliance, Friendship, and mutual Interest, are the strongest Call to our Compassion and Tendernefs. And may it give to the World the most favourable Impressions of that Religion, which inspires the most enlarged Sentiments of Humanity, that You attended to this Call with a truly Christian Spirit; and with the same Zeal, which directs your Resolutions in pursuing every Plan of Policy and good Government for the Honour of your Country, gave the earliest Proof of your tender Concern for the unhappy Sufferers, so affectionately recommended to You by His Majesty, not less disposed by a natural Greatness of Soul to sympathize with the Distresses of other Nations, than to command our Affections in the endearing Character of the Father of His People.

Give

Give me Leave only to recommend upon this occasion, with a more general view to influence the Behaviour of the rest of the World, a Compassion of another kind, that of guarding against any hard Censures, which a Reflection upon these extraordinary Calamities may encourage in Minds too readily disposed to judge with Severity. Certain it is, that we have no Right to determine, what are the particular Intentions of Providence in this Dispensation: We have no Right to pronounce any of those Objects of Distress, whose Fate we this Day deplore, to be greater Sinners, merely because they have been greater Sufferers. Whatever were their Errors, whatever their Failings, arising either from the Prejudices of Education, the Weakness of human Judgment, or any other Cause, which darkens the Mind in its Pursuit of Truth, God, and not Man, is their proper Judge; to Him they must stand or fall; He may pity and pardon those, whom we are ready to condemn without Mercy. For the Honour of our Nation, I hope this is not the general Temper of our People, sure I am it is not the Temper and Genius of our Religion; for the Lesson it teaches, is not to search with Curiosity into the Secrets of Providence, not to take occasion from the Calamities of others to indulge any uncharitable Reflections, but *to search and to try our own ways, to repent, lest we likewise perish.*

Secondly,

Secondly, With regard to that View of our Circumstances, which the Situation of our publick Affairs calls upon us to consider, it falls not properly within the Province of the Preacher to offer any Instruction: It is none of our Business to enter into the Field or the Cabinet, to judge of the Preparations for War, or to balance and reconcile the interfering Interests of Nations: We leave these, as the proper Subjects of Attention, to those whose Duties call upon them, and whose Abilities qualify them to be the Guardians of the publick Safety. It may not however be thought improper or unseasonable for us to remark, that as it seems to be an ill-timed Ambition in our Enemy to be making Encroachments in distant Countries, and planning Schemes of Conquest by the Destruction of Thousands, whilst the Hand of Providence is stretched forth to destroy, and may cause the Disturbers of Mankind to fear and tremble for themselves; it will be the severest Reproach to *our* Policy and Wisdom, if we suffer any Motive whatever to cool *our* zeal in the Defence of our Country, whilst every Thing dear to us may be in Danger, and must owe its Security to a firm Union and Concord amongst ourselves.

Lastly, The Lesson of Instruction, which the alarming State of the moral World, ought to teach us, is that of a serious Attention to the true Interests of Virtue
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and Religion, as the best means of producing that National Reformation, which may engage the Favour and Protection of Heaven.

I am now addressing myself to those whose Stations and Abilities give them a great Influence in forwarding this glorious Work: It is *Your* part to make the Laws for the Support of Virtue, it is *Your's* to encourage and reward it, and what is of still more importance, it is *Your's* to be the most effectual Examples in forming the Manners and Behaviour of the rest of the world. It is indeed from the superior Ranks and Degrees of life, that the inferior part of Mankind learn to model their Practice; it is the Example of the Magistrate which commands with Authority; it is this, which must give Vigour to the Laws, and make them speak the Language of Virtue with a Force and Dignity not to be resisted: It is the Example of the Parent, from whence the Child learns to form his Behaviour, and becomes either the Disgrace or the Ornament of his Country: It is the Example of the Master, from whence the Servant learns that Regard and Reverence to his Creator, that Justice and Fidelity in his Station, which are the great Security of our Lives, and the safest Guard of our domestick Repose. And therefore it is absurd to complain of a general Disregard to all Order and Authority whatsoever, if no care is taken in our respective Characters to support our own Authority: If on the contrary our Children
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and Dependants see nothing in our Conduct, which is grave, manly, and serious, if they see a general Levity and Dissipation of thought in our whole Deportment, our Days consumed in a lazy Indolence, or a vicious Extravagance, our Nights in Rioting and Intemperance, in every base, unmanly Pleasure, or that which is the Bane of all Virtue, excessive Gaming. The dreadful Effects of these Examples we see and complain of, and yet how seldom do we find leisure for the Reflection, that when we have once by our Influence and Authority introduced a Disregard to every thing serious amongst the lower part of Mankind, it is not our Command, our Reproof, nor even the Terror of the Civil Arm, which will awe them into Virtue?

A general Reformation therefore must begin with the Great and the Powerful; let them shine forth in acts of Piety and Virtue, Thousands will take the Fashion from them, the Dignity of their Characters will give Credit and Countenance to Religion, will command an Influence, and be the happy means of increasing the Number of those, for whose sakes, *God may be intreated to turn away from His Anger, and to spare the Land.*

But let it not be forgot at the same time, that however necessary it is, a general Reformation should begin with the higher Ranks and Degrees of Life, still it requires the personal Care and Attention of every

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Individual

Individual to make it compleat and perfect. And therefore in vain do we express our zeal for that National Amendment, without which we have no Right to expect the Protection of Heaven, unless every Man takes up the Resolution of beginning at home, by *healing the Plague of his own Heart, and keeping himself at least from every wicked thing.*

May this then be the solemn Resolution which we make this Day in the House of God: And may that Seriousness, with which we have offered up our Devotions, that Humiliation with which we have implored the Pardon of our Sins, fix it deeply in our Hearts, and so influence our whole Conduct to God and to Man, that we may appear to the great Searcher of Hearts, not to have put on the solemn Garb of Repentance, merely to afflict our Souls for a Day; but that it is the fixed Purpose of our Lives, to give that Testimony of our Sincerity, which God Himself has required, *by breaking off our Sins by Righteousness and our Iniquities by shewing Mercy to the poor.*

Then may we hope, that our Prayers will ascend up to Heaven, and pierce the Ears of the Lord of Sabaoth: Then may we assure ourselves, that *God will be our Hope and Strength, a very present Help in the time of Trouble:* Then may we speak Comfort to ourselves, and in an humble Dependence upon that All-powerful Being, who upon many signal Occasions has been our Guard, and mighty Deliverer, take up the
Resolution

Resolution of the Psalmist, and say, *Though an Host of Men were laid against us, yet will not our heart be afraid, though there rise up War against us, yet will we put our Trust in God: We will not fear, though the Earth be moved, though the Hills be carried into the midst of the Sea, though the Waters thereof rage and swell, and the Mountains shake at the Tempest of the same: For the Lord of Hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our Refuge.*

F I N I S.

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